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INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE
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RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 4069
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 1884
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 1750
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 2319
RHMFIUU/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 2723
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ASHGABAT 000957

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR SCA/CEN, SCA/FO (ROBERT DEUTSCH), SCA/PPD, EUR/ACE, DRL

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SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN AND AFGHANISTAN JOINT WORKING GROUP MEETING ON
THE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION ON THE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION OF A
500KV TRANSMISSION LINE

11. (SBU) Sensitive but unclassified. Not for public Internet.

12. (SBU) SUMMARY: On July 16-18, 2008, the Joint Working Group of the Afghanistan Ministry of Energy and Water and the Turkmenistan Minister of Energy and Industry met in Ashgabat to discuss technical details of the construction of a 500 kv interconnection for the supply of electric energy from Turkmenistan to Afghanistan. The meeting resulted in a protocol agreement. However the Afghanistan side still seeks commitment from the Turkmen side on funding and on a construction schedule. END SUMMARY.

13. (U) Background: In March 2007, Afghan and Turkmen parties signed a Cooperation Agreement for Afghanistan to purchase electric energy from Turkmenistan. Since then, USAID has expressed its commitment to the project through signing a Task Order under the Afghanistan Infrastructure and Rehabilitation Program for construction of a 500/220 kv substation in Andhoy, Afghanistan, and its design is currently underway. USAID received funding for the 500 kv transmission line from Aqeena to the Andhoy substation in Afghanistan and plans to issue an award for construction soon, and USAID has requested FY 2009 funds to complete the remaining 220 kv portion of the transition line from Andhoy to Naibabad, Afghanistan.

14. (U) Key members of this July 2008 Joint Working Group included: Timur Patarov, Chief Engineer of the Turkmenistan State Power Corporation, Ministry of Energy and Industry; Kurban Dowiyev, Director of the Project Institute of the Ministry of Energy and Industry; Serdar Garayev, Head of the Energy Export Department of the State Energy Corporation Ministry of Energy and Industry; Ghulam Rabbani, President of the Ministry of Energy and Water Afghan Power Production Company (DABM); Mohammad Hashim, Chief Engineer of the DABM; USAID/Afghanistan consultants to the Afghanistan Ministry of Energy and Water Krish Krishnan and Prem Babu; and Craig Anderson, Deputy Director, Office of Infrastructure, Engineering and Energy, USAID/Afghanistan.

14. (SBU) Initially, Afghan Joint Working Group members had the following goals for this meeting, including: a) to obtain a

Turkmenistan government financial commitment to fund construction on the Turkmen portion; b) to negotiate a timetable for beginning of construction; c) to reach key technical/engineering decisions related to the planned transmission line. The Joint Working Group achieved the third goal, as all sides agreed on a majority of operating parameters, design specifications and construction specifications. Indeed the Turkmenistan side claimed that this set of meetings was strictly to discuss technical/engineering matters.

¶15. (SBU) In terms of the first two goals, the Turkmenistan side was not prepared to agree on a schedule and stated that they were not authorized to comment or make commitments on behalf of the Government of Turkmenistan related to funding. Afghanistan Joint Working Group members emphasized the need for such information and commitments soon in order to secure timely release of funding from donors for construction of facilities inside Afghanistan. The Turkmenistan members acknowledged this need and agreed to provide information, including a construction schedule, by the next Joint Working Group meeting.

¶16. (U) As part of the information exchange, the Afghanistan delegation found it useful to visit a natural gas fired single-cycle power plant that is similar to the Turkmenistan facility that would be built for this project.

¶17. (SBU) Joint Working Group members signed a "Protocol of the Meeting of the Joint Working Group" that detailed results of this Joint Working Group meeting and expectations for the next meeting. It also says the next meeting will take place within three months. Joint Working Group members also agreed to communicate and exchange relevant information via e-mail before the next JWG meeting.

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¶18. (SBU) COMMENT: The Afghan participants expressed their confidence to USAID participants that the Turkmenistan side is serious about fulfilling the first two goals and moving forward with the process. However, an Afghan embassy source was less sanguine. He said the Afghan side was unhappy with the results. He also lambasted the attitude of the Turkmen, who he said were unwilling to consider the Afghan position. END COMMENT.

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